AARDVARK-VANAHEIM PRESENTS

CEREBUS

23 DEC

$1.50

A Note from the Publisher

This issue has been the one that almost killed us. Between #22 and this one we have had to change printers, find new shippers, and have doubled the print-run. If you think that that's easy to do, as well as set-up the Swords of Cerebus book so it will be printed at the same time as this issue — you've never tried your hand at this business.

I do apologize for the increase in the price of the book. If there had been any way around it, believe me, I would have found it. My little calculator and I worked fevourishly to cut down costs, find a cheaper printer, etc. etc. But all that we did was make sure that Dave and I were still making something from the book, to off-set the rising costs of paper. (There's a shortage you know. It happens when there are lots of big forest fires in the summer.) So the price had to go up, because our rent and food costs don't stay the same. I'm hoping circulation will get another boost in about six months, so we don't have to go through this sort of thing again. It's either that or keep raising the price of the book. And we don't really want to do that.

Obviously, I haven't said a thing about the insides of this issue. Well — I'm not going to. I felt that it speaks well enough for itself, and if we're ever going to get this thing printed I've got to get this going. I've got typesetting to send out, PMT's to get shot and a few million other things. So you read it and let me know how it was!!!!

CEREBUS

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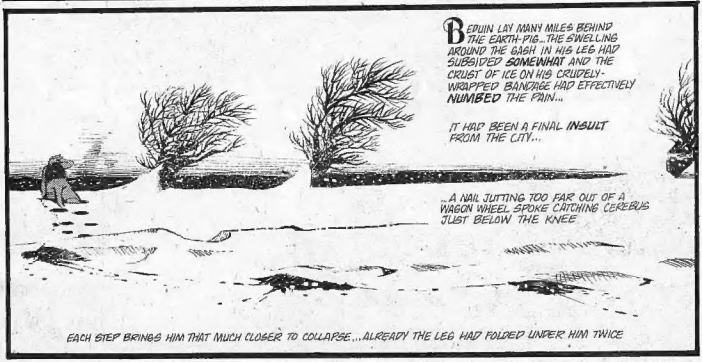
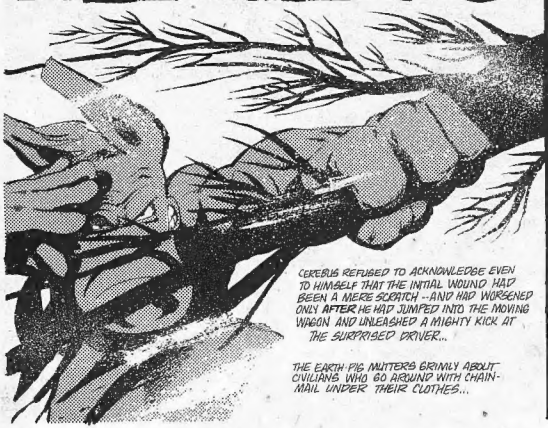

BEDLIN LAY MANY MILES BEHIND THE EARTH-PIG...THE SWELLING AROUND THE GASH IN HIS LEG HAD SUBSIDED **SOMEWHAT** AND THE CRUST OF ICE ON HIS CRUDELY-WRAPPED BANDAGE HAD EFFECTIVELY **NUMBED** THE PAIN...
IT HAD BEEN A FINAL **INSULT** FROM THE CITY...
...A NAIL JUTTING TOO FAR OUT OF A WAGON WHEEL SPOKE CATCHING CEREBUS JUST BELOW THE KNEE
EACH STEP BRINGS HIM THAT MUCH CLOSER TO COLLAPSE...ALREADY THE LEG HAD FOLDED UNDER HIM TWICE

The BEGUILING


CEREBUS REFUSED TO ACKNOWLEDGE EVEN TO HIMSELF THAT THE INITIAL WOUND HAD BEEN A MERE SCRATCH --AND HAD WORSENED ONLY **AFTER** HE HAD JUMPED INTO THE MOVING WAGON AND UNLEASHED A MIGHTY KICK AT THE SURPRISED DRIVER...
THE EARTH-PIG MUTTERS GRIMLY ABOUT CIVILIANS WHO GO AROUND WITH CHAIN-MAIL UNDER THEIR CLOTHES...

NO. THERE HE IS AGAIN. HE WAS HIDDEN BY THAT TREE.
IS HE STILL THERE, THERESA? WHAT DOES HE LOOK LIKE?
MMM. HE'S SHORT.
AND HE LOOKS SORT OF FURRY AND MUSCULAR AND REALLY CUTE!
CUTE? LET ME SEE--I WANT TO SEE!
YUK! HE ISN'T CUTE--HE'S GRUESOME
I DON'T KNOW-- IT LOOKS LIKE HIS LEG IS HURT.
HE ISN'T ARMED, MAYBE MADAME PUFORT WILL LET US KEEP HIM?
HE'S JUST STANDING THERE -- WHY IS HE JUST STANDING THERE?
HE'S SORT OF SWAYING--WHY IS HE SORT OF...
AWWWW.
FAN DOWN GO BOOM.
THE POOR SWEETHEART
LET'S GO HELP HIM.
YES, LETS!

HMM. PERHAPS HE IS NOT ALL THAT GRUESOME...
HE MUST BE FREEZING IN THAT VEST.
MM? WHA--? OH--CEREBUS IS FINE--YOU CAN PUT HIM DOWN.
BE CAREFUL OF HIS LEG ...
MADAME-- WE FOUND A WOUNDED AH... CREATURE... IN FRONT OF THE
REALLY-- IT'S NOT NECESSARY
CEREBUS CAN CARRY HIMSELF ...
I SAW, THERESA. PUT HIM ON THE BENCH IN THE ENTRYWAY...
CEREBUS IS IN NEED OF SHELTER... CEREBUS CAN PAY YOU FOR...
I'M SURE YOU CAN, M'SIEU. AND WE WILL BE MOST GRATEFUL FOR YOUR GENEROSITY
I FEEL IT IS MORE IMPORTANT, HOWEVER, FOR YOU TO UNDERSTAND YOUR NEW SITUATION ...
I DON'T HAVE TO LOOK TOO CLOSELY AT THAT LEG TO SEE THAT THERE IS A GREAT DANGER OF INFECTION...
YOU WILL STAY OFF OF THE LEG UNTIL IT IS COMPLETELY HEALED AND WE WILL ACCEPT A REASONABLE AMOUNT OF MONEY AS COMPENSATION FOR TAKING CARE OF YOU
I CAN MAKE FEW GUARANTEES, BUT I DO PROMISE YOU THAT, IN THE EVENT AMPUTATION BECOMES NECESSARY, I WILL USE ALL OF MY SURGICAL SKILL TO ENSURE THAT YOU SURVIVE...
NO EXTRA CHARGE?
NO, M'SIEU. NO EXTRA CHARGE.

MY SCHOOL IS NOT WHAT IT ONCE WAS, MSIEU...LOWER FELDA HAS SELDOM SEEN YEARS AS LEAN AS THIS...
THERESA, KATRINA AND JANETTE ARE THE ONLY GIRLS WHOSE PARENTS COULD AFFORD THE ENROLMENT FEE THIS YEAR...
THEY ARE QUITE REMARKABLE IN THEIR OWN WAYS.
I SEE I'M BORING YOU, SO I WILL COME STRAIGHT TO THE POINT...
THOSE GIRLS ARE IN MY CHARGE, MSIEU...I WILL NOT TOLERATE ANYONE...
... TAMPERING WITH THEM!... I TRUST I MAKE MYSELF CLEAR...
AS A BELL...NOW IF YOU DON'T MIND...
CEREBUS WOULD LIKE TO LAPSE INTO A COMA...
...FOR ABOUT A WEEK.
AS YOU WISH, MSIEU.
THE GIRLS TAKE THEIR LESSONS DOWNSTAIRS...
SO YOU SHOULD NOT BE DISTURBED...
CEREBUS LETS HIMSELF DRIFT INTO A DREAMLESS SLUMBER...
...THE THROBBING IN HIS LEG LITTLE MORE THAN A MINOR ANNOYANCE.

M'SIEU?
NHN?
M'SIEU... ARE YOU AWAKE?
IT IS ME...
THERESA
MAY I COME IN?
SORRY, KID-- THAT MIGHT BE CONSIDERED TAMPERING ...
AND RIGHT NOW, CEREBUS WOULD BE LUCKY TO BEAT YOUR TEACHER THREE FALLS OUT OF FIVE...!
I HAVE A BOTTLE OF WHISKEY...
M'SIEU?
OF COURSE I'LL GO IF YOU REALLY WANT ME TO...
CEREBUS DOESN'T SUPPOSE YOU'D CONSIDER LEAVING THE WHISKEY IN HERE
AND COUNTING THE CRACKS ON THE DINING ROOM CEILING...
REALLY, M'SIEU
I AM NOT ALTOGETHER UNPLEASANT COMPANY YOU KNOW!

MADAME DUFORT SO DISTRUSTS OUTSIDERS DOESN'T SHE'S HER EVERY WAKING MOMENT IS DEVOTED TO SHELTERING US...
FOR JANETTE AND KATRINA WHO ARE SO MUCH LESS MATURE ...THERE IS A GREAT NEED FOR SUCH CLOSE SUPERVISION. I, HOWEVER, AM NOT LIKE THEM...
FOR EXAMPLE... IT DOES NOT FRIGHTEN ME TO BE ALONE WITH ONE SUCH AS YOU, MISSIEU, YOU PROBABLY FIND THIS ATTITUDE REFRESHING -- SO MANY GIRLS FIND IT DIFFICULT TO RELAX AROUND A MEMBER OF THE OPPOSITE...
AROUND MEN I MEAN.
I THINK STIMULATING WITH MEN CAN BE QUITE CONVERSATIONAL AT TIMES.
HAHA HA...
SILLY ME-- THAT'S NOT WHAT I MEANT TO SAY AT ALL...
CEREBUS COULD HAVE SWORN HE HEARD SOMEONE MENTION WHISKEY.
...BUT, THEN WE ARE ADULTS ARE WE NOT, WE TWO? ...WE CAN SPEAK OF... "STIMULATING" ...
BEING WORDLY WE TWO, IT DOESN'T... DISTURB US.
I FEEL WE HAVE AN UNDERSTANDING ABOUT SPEAKING YOU AND I
WE MIGHT EVEN SPEAK OF...BODILY FUNCTIONS WERE WE SO DISPOSED
RIGHT RIGHT
NOW HOW ABOUT THE ...
THERESA! A SOLDIER APPROACHES! ...
I AM SORRY, M'SIEU
I'M AFRAID THE SECURITY OF THE SCHOOL COMES FIRST...
HEY! WAIT!
WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO?
KNIT HIM TO DEATH?!
YOU...
HEY!!
OF ALL THE IDIOTIC ...

DOUBTLESS THE SIGNAL HAD BEEN INTENDED ONLY TO WARN THERESA TO FIND A HIDING SPOT...
PROBABLY A HIDDEN CLOSET OR FRUIT CELLAR IN THE BASEMENT...
THE WOMEN WOULD BE SAFE AT LEAST...
BAM BAM
BUT THAT MEANT THAT CEREBUS' WAS THE MORE VULNERABLE SITUATION...
THE EARTH-PIG BEGINS TO FLEX HIS MUSCLES UNCONSCIOUSLY...
B'JORNO!
I AM MADAME DUFORT...
CAN I HELP YOU?
GRAZIA!
CEREBUS TRIES TO CONVINCE HIMSELF THAT HIS EARS ARE PLAYING TRICKS ON HIM...
SURELY EVEN MADAME DUFORT COULDN'T BE NAIVE ENOUGH TO ALLOW A SOLDIER TO ENTER HER HOUSE...
YOU' HOUSE, ANH? MUCHA ROOM IN HE'
VER' NICE!
VER' WAM.
VERY WHAT, M'SIEU?
WAM.
IT IS NOT-A COLT. WAM.
AH, WELL, IT'S NONE OF CEREBUS' WORRY.
YES, M'SIEU -- IT IS WARM IN HERE, BUT I'M...
MY SOJERS REST HE'... IN YOU HOUSE.
NO, M'SIEU, THIS IS A GIRLS' SCHOOL; WE DO NOT ALLOW SOLDIERS TO REST HERE.... IT ISN'T PROPER.
PROP'?
NOT DECENT, NOT NICE.
NO! NO! 'S VER' DECEN' HOUSE...
'S VER', VER' NICE HOUSE
NO, M'SIEU -- TO HAVE SOLDIERS HERE WOULD BE "NOT NICE".
AW! YOU GONNA LIKE 'EM OKAY...
'SI, A SWELL BRUNCH O' GUYS...

I'M AFRAID YOU MISUNDERSTAND, M'SIEU...
MY SOLDERS REST HE' OKAY?
I DON' WANNA HURT YOU, OL' LADY...
BUT...
MY SOLDERS REST HE' OKAY?
CERBUS REFLECTS ON THE WISDOM OF FACING A SERPAN CAPTAIN WITH A WATER JUG AS HIS ONLY WEAPON...
YOU SAY 'YES' ATTSA GOOD ...
HE TRIED TO LOOK ON IT AS AN EXPERIMENT WITH A NEW WEAPON...
...YOU SAY 'NO'...
...WELL...
IF IT WORKED, HE COULD ALWAYS ARM ALL OF BERLIN'S CRIPPLES WITH WATER JUGS AND LAY SIEGE TO PALNU...
ATTSA NOT SO GOOD...
I SEE WE ARE NOT COMMUNICATING AT ALL, M'SIEU
MORE'S THE PITY...
I DO NOT, HOWEVER, INTEND TO ALLOW SOLDIERS INTO MY SCHOOL
KATRINA?
ONE...
TWO...

FAINT
GUH!
GHK
MAY I INQUIRE, M'SIEU AS TO THE REASON YOU HAVE CHOSEN TO LEAVE YOUR BED?
MMM?
WELL, MADAME IT'S LIKE THIS:
CEREBUS SUDDENLY HAD THIS CRAZY URGE TO CRAWL OUT HERE AND FAINT...
JANETTE...
ASSIST M'SIEU CEREBUS BACK TO HIS BED
AND WE SHALL SEE HOW BADLY HE HAS HURT HIMSELF...

DO YOU GET VISITS LIKE THAT OFTEN?
OFTEN ENOUGH.
I TRY TO GIVE THEM EVERY OPPORTUNITY TO LEAVE QUIETLY...
WE'VE BURIED TWENTY OVER THE LAST THREE YEARS
YOUR DRESSING NEEDS TO BE CHANGED
RRRIP
NGHHH
I DO HOPE YOU NOW UNDERSTAND HOW PAINFUL IT CAN BE TO DISOBEY ME..
AND THAT IT WILL NOT BE NECESSARY FOR ME TO REMIND YOU AGAIN TO STAY IN BED M'SIEU...
RIGHT
THE SOLDIERS DO NOT COME AS OFTEN AS THEY USED TO. PERHAPS THEIR OFFICERS HAVE GROWN WEARY OF LOSING MEN EVERY TIME OUR AREA OF THE MARSHLANDS HAS BEEN EXPLORED. PERHAPS, TOO, WE HAVE FINALLY BEEN DESIGNATED AS "IMPASSABLE TERRAIN." ON ENOUGH OF THEIR MAPS...I NEVER STOP HOPING THAT EACH NEW SOLDIER IS THE LAST ONE
ARE MOST OF THE SOLDIERS YOU BURY.. SEPRAN - LIKE THAT ONE?
IS THAT WHAT HE WAS, M'SIEU?
I'M AFRAID I DON'T KNOW MUCH ABOUT MILITARY MATTERS
NOW THAT YOU MENTION IT THOUGH
I DON'T REMEMBER SEEING THAT UNIFORM ON ANY OF THE OTHERS
AND HIS ACCENT WAS VERY ODD WASN'T IT?
SEPRAN!
UNLESS CEREBUS MISSES HIS GUESS, THE LOWER FELDAN GOVERNMENT HAS SIGNED SOME KIND OF AN ACCORD WITH THE SEPRAN EMPIRE...
..PERMITTING TROOPS TO PASS THROUGH LOWER FELDA...
..MORE THAN LIKELY TO SMASH THE CIRINIST GOVERNMENT OF UPPER FELDA
BUT IF THIS AREA IS KNOWN TO BE IMPASSABLE TERRAIN...
WHY WOULD THEY PASS THROUGH HERE?
PROBABLY THE TRIBUNAL OF LOWER FELDA GAVE THEM MAPS WITH ALL REFERENCES TO THE MARSHLANDS DELETED..
HOPING THE EMPEROR WOULD LOSE A LEGION OR TWO IN THE MUCK.

BUT CEREBUS CAN GUARANTEE YOU THAT EVERY INCH OF COUNTRYSIDE AROUND HERE IS FROZEN SOLID..
THEY WON'T LOSE A SINGLE MAN
AND YOU BELIEVE THAT THIS SHOULD WORRY US?
WELL THAT DEPENDS
HOW WORRIED ARE YOU GOING TO BE BY SIXTEEN THOUSAND SEPOYS MARCHING PAST YOUR SCHOOL?
THAT'S A CONSERVATIVE GUESS ON CEREBUS' PART...
IT DEPENDS ON WHETHER THE SEPOYS ARE UNDER-ESTIMATING THE CIRINISTS' MILITARY STRENGTH
MA FIEU
I MUST SUMMON MY GIRLS--WE WILL NEED A PLAN!
I WILL NOT GIVE UP SO EASILY, M'SIEU
MAYBE YOU CAN CROCHET SIXTEEN THOUSAND PUP TENTS AND LEAVE THEM ON YOUR FRONT STEP AS A PEACE OFFERING...
SURE
AS HE LISTENS TO THE SOUND OF MADAME DUFORT'S FOOTSTEPS FADING, CEREBUS GLARES BALEFULLY AT HIS LEFT LEG.
. OR BALANCE SIXTEEN THOUSAND FLATIRONS OVER YOUR WINDOWS AND DOORS TO KNOCK THEM OUT IF THEY TRY TO BREAK IN.

LATER...
WELL...
IT IS A GOOD THING WE HAVE HAD THIS MUCH WARNING, NOZ
THEY ARE ONLY SOLDIERS.
SURELY WE CAN THINK OF SOMETHING TO FOOL THEM.
LOOK!
CEREBUS CAN TELL YOU THE ONLY PLAUSIBLE COURSE OF ACTION...
YOU JUST HAVE TO LEAVE--TRY AND REACH ONE OF THE LARGER TOWNS
WHERE YOU'LL BE SAFE...
CEREBUS ISN'T ABLE TO TRAVEL OR HE WOULD GO WITH YOU
IT DOESN'T MAKE ANY SENSE TO FACE FOUR SEPRAN LEGIONS IF YOU DON'T HAVE TO...
WHAT ABOUT A QUARANTINE, M'SIEU?
SURELY EVEN SEPRAN SOLDIERS WOULD AVOID A PLAGUE-RIDDEN...
THE SEPRAN LEGIONS TRAVEL WITH THEIR OWN PHYSICIANS.
HANG A QUARANTINE SIGN ON THE DOOR AND YOU'LL BE HIP-DEEP IN TONGUE DEPRESSORS
...
THERE'S NOTHING A SEPRAN PHYSICIAN LIKES BETTER THAN SOME HORRIBLY DEFORMED PLAGUE VICTIM TO POKE AND JAB AND PUCK AT...
SO UNLESS YOU KNOW OF A GOOD WAY TO DEFORM YOUR GIRLS CEREBUS IS AFRAID YOUR PLAN WON'T WORK...
MAYBE?
I BELIEVE I HAVE AN IDEA.

AFTER JANETTE RELATES HER IDEA.
NO
M'SIEU..
..WILL YOU NOT RECONSIDER?
HER IDEA IS A GOOD ONE, IF WE DO AS YOU SAY AND LEAVE YOU WILL FALL INTO THE HANDS OF THE SEPOYS..
THIS WAY YOU WILL BE SAFE - AND SO WILL OUR SCHOOL...
M'SIEU?
CEREBUS..
..IS..
THINKING
ABOUT IT!!

AND SO...
"JOINA DA ARMY" SHE SAY. "ITA BE ABOOD FOR Y'U! YU MEK ALOTSA MONEY."
"YU BE ABLE TO BUY AY'U OWN AFARM IN ATHREE YEARS, ANH?"
" I'M ANOT WANT TO BE CULT," I SAY
"WHASSAMATTA FO' YU", SHE SAY.. "LOWER FELPA, SHE'S AWARM AS ATOAST!"
" THREE YEARS ABE UP BEFORE Y'U KNOWN IT."

WHEN I'M AGET HOME
IN ATHREE YEARS
I'MA KILLA HER.

em
eh...
'ALO!
I'M AWELCOME ME TO Y'U COUNTRY...
I'M ANEED A PLACE TO STAY.
MY FRIEN' TOO AS AWELL
I'M SORRY M'SIEU
ONE OF MY GIRLS HAS THE PLAGUE
YOU AND YOUR FRIEND WOULD NOT WANT TO STAY HERE
NOW IF YOU WILL EXCUSE ME
PLAGUE, ANH?
I'M ASHOO NOT WAN' TO GET ATHE PLAGUE
BUT MAYB' THERE ISA NO PLAGUE
ANH?
MAYB' Y'U SAY TO Y'USELF "EY' THIS ISSA BIG A DUMB SEPRAN HE'"
"I'M ATELL AHIM A COCK AN' A BULL STORY"
"I'M A TELL HIM ABOUT A PLAGUE"
WAL..
MAYB' THISA BIGA DUMB SEPRAN WILL SEE THIS AGORL FOR HIMASELF, ANH?
IF YOU... INSIST, M'SIEU...
I WILL ASK THAT YOU NOT MAKE TOO MUCH NOISE
DONNA WORRY
IN HERE
I WILL ASK YOU AGAIN TO BE VERY QUIET.

MALA DICTO!
LSÙAU' THE PLAGUE
SHE MEKA 'YU DEAD!
THIS APLAGUE SHE MEK 'YU.
...m.
-'YU-BEE-ELLA-WH..!
UNH!!
WHY-Y'U-STINKING
M'SIEU!
ANH?
OH
HEH HEH
I'M A FORGET

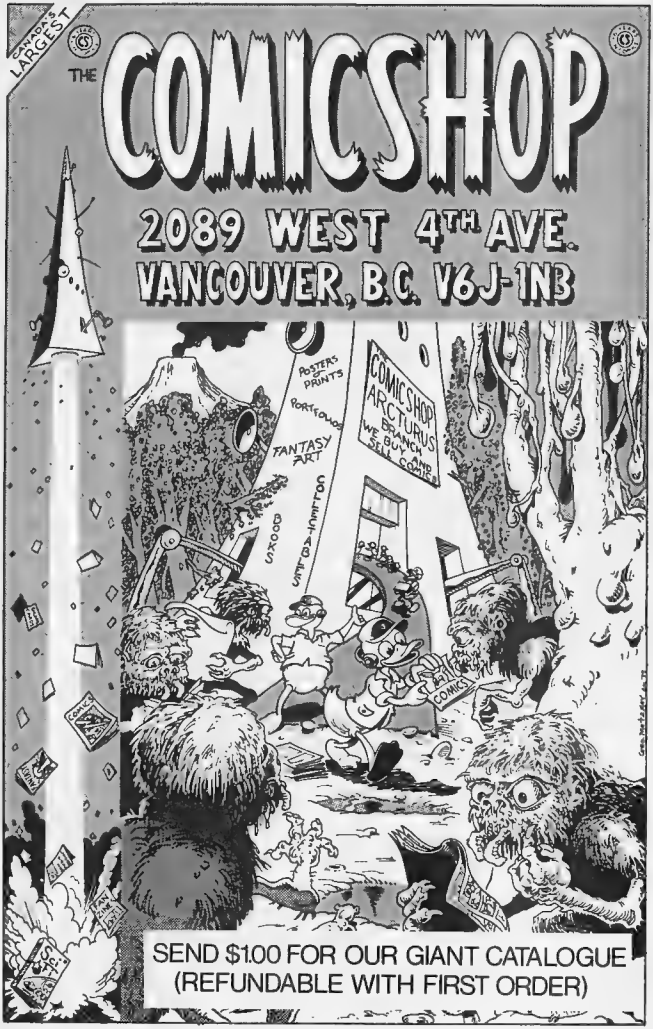
SERGEAN'? YOU INNA HE'?
EH! MY FREN'.. FINALL' HE GET THROUGH DA SNOW TIBERIUS!!
I'M ASHOW MY FREN'- HOKAY?
VERY WELL BUT THEN YOU'LL BOTH HAVE TO LEAVE..
DONNA WORRY! I'M A LIKEA MY NOSE TO STAY THIS ABIZE..
'EY TIBERIUS!
Y'LI WANNA TO SEE DA UGLIEST LITTLA GORL...
INNA DA WHOLE AVIDE A WORL'?
HEE HEE
UGL' HUH?
SHOO! SHOO!
I'M A NO KID Y'LI
Y'LI BE LUCK' NOT ATO LOSE AY'LI LUNCH.
HEE HEE THISSA SOUND A PRETT' BOOP, SERGEAN'
JUST ONE A LOOK.
ANNA THEN WE LEAVE
THANK YOU M'SIEU
EH? WASSA THIS?
TARIM!

HEY!
I'M A SERVA WIT DATA GUY ONCE...
HEY!
I'M A SERVA WIT DATA GUY ONCE!
Y'U SERVA WIT A LITTA GORL-E NADDA Y'U-Z CRAZ'Z
ISSA LITTLA GORL, ESTUPIDO...
IS NOT A LITTLA GORL, SERGEAN!
ISSA CEREBUS DA AARDAWARK
I'M A SERVA WIT AHIM INNA RED AMARCHES
CEREBUS!?
...
DA...
AARDAWARK?!
SOOOO..
FOR WADDA Y'U DID TO MY BRUDDA
I'M A SWORE I'M A GETA Y'U SOMEDAY, LITTLA BRAN SMARTA GUY
...
I'MA ALWAYS SAY "LUIS- SOMEDAY Y'U GONNA FINDA THIS A CEREBUS..."
"AND WHENA Y'U DO"
"Y'U GONNA TEACH AHIM A REAL ABOOD LESSON."

I'M A LOOK IN Y'I EYES AN I'M AGEE Y'U THINKIN' "EY! WASSA PIG-- WHAT I DO TO HISSA BRUDDA, ANYZ"
"WHY FOR IS DIS A GUY ABOUT TO MEK A WHOLE LOTTA WHIFF ASIZE HOLES INNA MY BOD"
WAL, I'M A TELL Y'U, MR. CEREBUS DA SMARTABLY AARDA . . .
TWANG
GUK!
WHY COULDN'T YOU WAIT A FEW MORE SECONDS?
CEREBUS WAS JUST GETTING INTERESTED
'EY!
Y'U
Y'U JUSTA KILLED...
MY SERGEAN'
Y'U CRAZY BI----
TWANG!
UNK

YOUR WEAPON DOES NOT SOUND LIKE IT IS IN PERFECT WORKING ORDER KATRINA..
I WOULD SUGGEST YOU CLEAN AND OIL IT IMMEDIATELY
YES MADAME
JANETTE.
YOUR AIM WAS OFF BY FIVE INCHES-- IT IS, NOTHING THAT A FEW HOURS OF PRACTICE WOULD NOT CORRECT.
YES MADAME
THEREGA
I WANT YOU TO SEE IF IT IS STILL SNOWING.
IF IT ISN'T, THERE WILL BE FOOTPRINTS OUTSIDE
TAKE THE BROOM AND ELIMINATE ANY TRACE OF OUR VISITORS' PASSING
STAY ALERT-- OTHER SOLDIERS ARE APT TO BE NEARBY...
YES MADAME
IF YOU SEE ANY, RETURN IMMEDIATELY
YES MADAME
AND HAVE TWO MORE BEDS MOVED IN HERE
JANETTE M'SIEU CERBUS WILL NEED TWO M...
PARDON, MADAME?

I BELIEVE M'SIEU CEREBUS WOULD LIKE OUR TWO VISITORS REMOVED FROM HIS ROOM
AT THE EARLIEST OPPORTUNITY.
YES MADAME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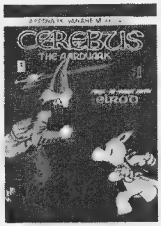

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WHAT IS MY OPINION OF THEM, ORIGINAL CANADIAN SERIES, HUH...
YES - BUT WE DON'T HAVE ANY FLAVOR CRYSTALS!
THAT'S BECAUSE YOU ATE ALL OF THEM IN ONE GO!!
YOU KNOW, I JUST THINK I'D SAY TOO MUCH ABOUT

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221 QUEEN ST S. #1401 - KITCHENER-ONTARIO N2G 1W5

Dave,

I may be jumping the gun here, but if that transition from #20 to #21 isn't given a good explanation soon, I'll be forced to conclude that you wrote yourself into a corner and took a cheap way out. I'm especially upset because I really liked #20 and what was going on, and then to jump right into this cockroach hotel was rather a shock. One of your writing strong points in the clever banter between Cerebus and everyone else, but balloon placement in #20 was a little difficult to follow. Kill Elrod! No! How do you pronounce Hsiffies. How did you like the Heatwave concert. I was there too and thought it was fantastic. Keep it up.

Dennis Summers
242 Cedar Street Apt. 4
East Lansing, Mich.
48823

Sorry about #21. It was SUPPOSED to be the same shock for you as it was for Cerebus. At least that was the idea. Hsiffies is pronounced without the "H" – siffies. Heatwave was a lot of fun all right.

Dear Deni and Dave,

Keep up the good work on Cerebus! I first discovered him with number 17 and now have located and am in the process of buying all the back issues.

I have heard that you are going to reprint issue 1 through 10 and as well, put them in different volumes of Swords of Cerebus. (That is, you are going to reprint them singly and also in volumes). If you are going to reprint them singly, please put the word 'reprint' or some other telltale mark on the covers so as not to make the hard to get original issue one commonplace. This would not take away from the reprints, and it would add to the originals. I'm sure that all of the people who have bought back issues (at a copy of Cerebus for $3.00 mailed away for it, waited for it, and when I finally got it, the same copy of Cerebus (a reprint but could the average Cerebug tell that?) came to a local comic-shop for $1, I would be quite annoyed.

Well onto a different topic. Cerebus the Aardvark and Aardvark Vanaheim have inspired me to check into comics other than Marvel and DC. This has added dimension to my life. I feel indebted to Thanx and Punchem Innaface.

Cyprien Lomas
4485 S Stn. Ave.
Vancouver, B.C. V6R 1S4

Our final decision on reprinting has been to drop the idea of redoing individual issues (largely for the reasons you mention). We will be reprinting SWORDS OF CEREBUS, however, as demand dictates, so that the individual stories never become unavailable.

Dear Dave,

I would have written this letter even if you hadn't asked for letters in Cerebus #20, but it probably would've taken me a while longer to gather my thoughts and get this letter written. Anyway:

I'd like to see a checklist of Cerebus stories (or even of your other aardvark stories, like "A Boy and his Aardvark," which I have but didn't connect with you until I reread it awhile ago). Where can I order BLACK ZEPPELIN #1?

Michael Loubert's article about a wargaming simulation of the siege of Fluroc gave me an idea: What about defining the characters in CEREBUS using the rules of some of the role-playing games currently available? For instance, here are the specs on Cerebus for all of you familiar with "The Fantasy Trip" (MELEE & WIZARD).

ST 11
Dx 15
IQ 13
MA 8
weapons: short sword, small shield. -3 DX for all attacks on him because of his small size. Skills: sword, shield, horsemanship, literacy, alertness, recognize value, business sense, unarmed combat I. I realize some people may think that giving a three foot tall earth pig a strength of 11 is excessive, but remember how he defeated the revolutionary leader in Hand-to-Hand combat in CEREBUS #14? Also, don't forget that dwarves are small, but are often stronger than humans.

Or, for DUNGEONS & DRAGONS: ST 12, IQ 14, W 16, DEX 16, Con 14 weapons: same as above. I'd place Cerebus as a fighter/thief of about 8th-10th level.

But what about RUNEQUEST, TUNNELS & TROLLS, CHIVALRY & SORCERY, etc.? I'd appreciate hearing from people who play those games – also, if you've got any comments about the above descriptions, please let me know about them.

Also what about specs for other CEREBUS characters; Henrot, Commander Krull, Red Sophia, The Shadow Crawler, Geet-a, Necross the HAHAHA! Mad, and (especially) the Gerbles!

If I had anything else to say, I've forgotten it by now.

Keep up the *Good Work*!

Sincerely,
Brent Iverson,
4131 Markley Frost,
Ann Arbor, MI 48109

Uh-oh. I think Michael may have started something here.

Dear Dave,

Cerebus #20 gave me the hiccups.

Mike Bannon,
2453 Martin Drive
Dubuque, Iowa 52001

Try drinking four gallons of water while standing on your head. If that doesn't work, ST 11 DX 15 IQ 13 MA 8. It seems to work for Cerebus.

Dear Dave & Deni

I've been reading Cerebus since a roomie pressed issue #1 in my hands and said "I think you'll like this." I was at the London Annual Fun Fest (or whatever) when the third issue was passed out, and I was told that that lizard-headed man over there was Dave Sim. I have another autographed issue that my friend Denice Rehse brought back from another of those LAFF-cons.

Cerebus and I go back a long way. You've steadily improved from a pretty good beginning to become the best comic put out today and certainly the funniest. Now comes the painful part.

AARDVARK COMMENT

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How, I say HOW, can you consider offing Elrod? You must have baked your brains at Mosport! (I picked up a mild sunburn, myself; next time I think I'll bring along a pith helmet. Maybe I could make one from my burnt-out left headlight -- but I digress.)

Puncheminnaface! Elrod is by far the most sympathetic creature around -- an amiable half-wit who just wants to be liked. Contrasted to the manic Cockroach, grumpy aardvark hero, or conniving Lord Julius, he's about the only guy in the comic I'd like to have live down the street. Don't kill him! I mean it!

Cerebus sure is cute when he's crocked isn't he? His eyes get so dreamy...

Another gripe I have - it's not enough interfering with your creative planning, now I'm gonna criticize -- is the way you often open issues with a complete change of characters, locale, and plot, when you were in the middle of something else last issue. In the space of a page, or between the last page of one issue and the beginning of the next, Cerebus jumps from Lower Felda to Palnu, or Togith to Beduin, loses an army, gains a position, etc. etc. Try to make the narrative a bit more continuous when possible.

What's wrong with the President's ankle?

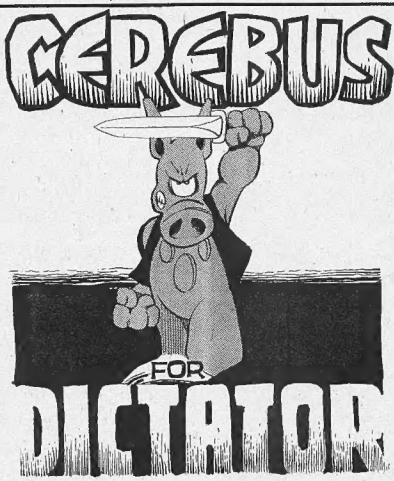
But anyway, I love your work, especially the dry wit and broad humour that reigns throughout; I like the line about "If you can't fool all of the people all of the time you should start breeding for stupidity."

Finally I hope you're going to explain how Cerebus gotto Beduin if the city is so well-guarded. And even if it wasn't for that matter. We left him comatose, presumably in Togith. (Explain that one, lizard-face.) Well, best regards and all, yer awed admirer,

Steven R. Trout
12841 Chelsea Apt. 12B
Detroit, MI 48213

P.S. One of my current projects is an overview of CEREBUS 1-21; What would you say is the most important thing you've accomplished with Cerebus thus far? Say something great and quotable, please.

Something great and quotable, please. walked into that one didn't you! I guess, aside from staying on the bi-monthly and now the monthly schedule (no mean feat, believe me), I would say it was introducing the idea of coherent plots to comic book humour. A situation comedy as opposed to theatre of the absurd as exemplified by Harvey Kurtzman, Will Elder, Jack Cole, et al. As to what's wrong with the President's ankle, you'll just have to ask Nancy. Personally, I think his ankle is going to be the least of our worries for the next four years.



With Ronald Reagan's finger taking up residence on the Oval Button in January, it is our firm belief that it is time to start planning for 1984. It was only by starting early, after all, that Jimmy Carter managed to oust Richard Nixon II in 1976. Owing to his extraordinary commitment to a monthly publishing schedule, (as well as a distinct reluctance to shake hands at factory gates for four years) Cerebus will be unable to campaign in person. But you can help bring common sense and a ruthless disregard for human rights to your nation's highest office. What half-baked religious nut in some back-water Arab state with more oil than brains would dare to stand against an Earth-pig born? Cerebus promises to cut taxes by looting every five bedroom house in Maryland. There's never been an anti-Washington candidate like this one. Start wearing your Cerebus for Dictator T-shirt now... remember, you're either with him or against him. And if you're against him, the odds are pretty good you won't live past Inauguration Day. Canadian readers are also welcome to order, purely for fun, since they already have a dictator. $5.75 ea. plus 1.00 postage and handling (Michigan residents please add 4% sales tax). 10% off for orders of 10 or more. Canadian customers must pay duty upon receipt. Comes in red, orange, yellow, kelly green, cobalt blue and white. S,M,L,XL. Please list first and second color choices. Please allow four weeks for delivery. Send orders to M Peteron, 1433 White, Ann Arbor, MI 48104.

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Denis Kitchen